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ABSTRACT

Study was undertaken to obtain information on use rural Louisianians make of radio and television, and to determine the part various mass media play in lives of rural people. Information was solicited from 25 households within each of 12 parishes in the state. Total number of persons sampled was 600. Cultural background, economic enterprises in parishes, relationship to metropolitan centers were factors considered. Results show women spend more time watching TV than men; income is not significant; the young and old are most avid TV and radio fans; and Negroes devote more time to radio and TV than whites. Most important mass media source of homemaking and agricultural information was magazines, of local, national and international news was TV. Study implies that more work should be done on television to reach more of rural population. [Two graphs showing data collected are of marginal legibility.] (NF)

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Tuning in On Rural Louisiana

A Survey of Adult Radio Listening and Television Viewing Habits

AC 012 800

LSU Cooperative Extension Service

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TUNING IN ON RURAL LOUISIANA — — —

A Survey of Adult Radio Listening and Television Viewing Habits

by

Douglas W. Darden and Alvin L. Bertrand*

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to gather information on the use which rural Louisianians are making of radio and television. Information was sought primarily to provide information to the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies interested in the dissemination of information on agriculture, home economics, and related subjects to the people of the state. In this regard, in Louisiana, the Cooperative Extension Service attempts to disseminate as much educational material as possible through mass media. This agency distributes approximately 1300 radio tape recordings and 500 spot announcements each year to radio stations throughout the state. Some 150 agents broadcast on radio stations in 42 parishes on a regular basis. In television, agents and specialists appear regularly on 12 of the state's 16 VHF commercial television stations.

A secondary, but important, purpose of the study was to determine the part the various mass media play in the lives of rural people. It is generally accepted that recent changes in mass media have changed the habits of the rural population, but no study has been conducted in Louisiana on radio in some 20 years and none on television in the last 10.¹ Therefore, this study should be of interest to the Extension Service as well as persons or organizations interested in reaching rural adult audiences. Finally, while the present study finds its inspiration in the above purposes, it is also an attempt to focus attention upon social change in rural areas of the nation. While the findings reported here may not be applicable to the entire national population, they at least provide some measure for studying the evolving scene. (Rural residents will be referred to in this publication as ruralites, as opposed to urbanites or suburbanites.)

The above indicates the overall objectives of the study. The specific aims were as follows:

1. To determine the time ruralites spend watching television and listening to radio.
2. To determine the television viewing and radio listening patterns of ruralites.

3. To determine the rural audience's reaction to homemaking and agricultural programs broadcast via radio and television.
4. To provide insight into the relationship of such factors as income, age, education, social participation, race and level of living to television viewing and radio listening.
5. To compare radio listening and television viewing patterns of today with those of previous studies.

Conceptual Frame of Reference

It is not possible, in a publication such as this, to do more than briefly outline the theoretical frame of reference employed for the study. The model used is within the tradition of sociology and is specifically related to the master social process of communication. This process is studied within the context of social systems (or groups) and is meant to articulate the structural elements of relevant systems such as norms, roles and status-positions. These elements are articulated in the course of sending the receiving messages from what might be termed a "public agency" system to what might be termed a client system. The communication process can thus be seen as vital to instigated social action—a primary purpose of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Social action takes place within the context of social systems, although all of the subsystems of a general system may not be involved directly in a given program. The problem envisioned for this study was that of increasing the effectiveness of Cooperative Extension workers and others as change agents—in the sense of diffusing information about new and improved practices. It is clear that the first requirement for effective communication is the exposure of a client public to a mes-

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¹See: Alvin L. Bertrand and Homer L. Hitt, *Radio Habits in Rural Louisiana*, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 440, September, 1949 and Alvin L. Bertrand and Frederick L. Bates, *Television in Rural Louisiana*, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 518, December, 1958.

sage. This is the fact which inspired the general thrust of the present study, that is, the attempt to learn the characteristics of the rural audience. However, it is also clear that the sender of a message must know certain facts about the patterns and preferences of the intended receiver(s) of the message if he is to achieve credibility. This, too, was in mind in planning the present research. Finally, it is clear that both senders and recipients of messages have definite positions in the overall social structure. These positions provide a cognitive frame within the context of which a relationship is established. The nature of this relationship is a factor in effective communication and needs to be known as precisely as possible by those preparing and sending messages.

The present study was designed to shed some light on the communicator-recipient relationship with regard to the aims of the Cooperative Extension Service program.

In the discussion which follows, no deliberate effort is made to relate the findings to a theoretical model. However, it is felt the reader will have little difficulty in envisioning that the analyses are implicitly, if not explicitly, in terms of the Extension Service as a social system, the members of which are interested in communicating change. By contrast, the rural population of Louisiana represents the population group from which members of the target systems are drawn. The latter might be farm or other types of rural organizations.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The objectives previously outlined guided the planning of the methodological procedures for the study. In this regard, it was deemed necessary that the data obtained be representative for the state and give a comprehensive picture of the use of radio and television by adult ruralites.

Choosing the Sample

It was obvious that, because of manpower limitations, sampling could not be done in every parish. Therefore, the decision was made to sample in 12 of the 64 parishes in the state. These parishes were selected with special care to insure that a wide geographic distribution was obtained. Other considerations included factors such as cultural background, types of economic enterprises within the parishes and relationship to major metropolitan centers.² Consultations were held with the three state district Extension agents to assure that the decisions were reasonable.

Parishes that participated in the study were Bienville, Calcasieu, DeSoto, East Feliciana, Grant, Lafourche, Richland, St. Landry, Tangipohoa, Tensas, Vermilion, and Vernon.

Another concern in the research procedure was the number of households from which information could be gathered. The resources of time and money were such as to necessitate a limited number of interviews. It was decided to solicit information from 25 households within each parish. This number was designed to yield a total sample of 300 households. Since it was planned to obtain information from the heads of households and their spouses, the total number of persons to be sampled was 600, or 0.05 per cent of the total

²For a discussion of rural social areas of Louisiana, see Alvin L. Bertrand, *The Many Louisianas*, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 496, June 1955.

projected rural population in Louisiana for 1967. The projected rural population was 1,185,000.¹

Sampling Procedure

County agents in all parishes agreed to help conduct the survey. Workshops were set up to instruct them in the procedures to be used and to acquaint them with the survey instruments.

A modified probability area sampling technique was used to draw the sample households.² Each agent was given a copy of a Louisiana Department of Highways map for his parish which showed dwellings that existed in 1963. On his map, each agent was asked to designate two or more areas whose inhabitants would be representative of all people in his parish. He was then instructed to take into consideration the types of rural enterprises within his parish as well as cultural and other considerations. No incorporated areas were included.

The agents were instructed to draw a circle around the designated areas and approximate the number of dwelling units within each circle. At this point the agents were instructed to locate some basic and convenient landmark within the circles. In most cases these were roads or highways. The agent then began counting dwellings until he arrived at a random interval number designed to provide the needed 25 households.

The two exceptions to the above procedure were in Vernon and Tensas parishes. The agent from Vernon Parish indicated rural dwellers in his parish were homogeneous, so he devised a plan to use the rural mail routes that began from his base headquarters in Leesville, Louisiana. These routes covered the entire parish, and he used predetermined intervals between houses to select sample households.

In Tensas Parish the population was also determined to be homogeneous. Here, however, the names and addresses of all rural persons in the parish were on the agent's mailing list. This list was divided by an interval number to produce the twenty-five sample households needed.

Interviewers were instructed to select alternate households according to this manner: If there was neither a radio nor a television set in the home, or if there was no person in the home who was able to keep the diary, they were to go to the next dwelling. They were also instructed to call back at least twice before going to an alternate house. A total of 302 household interviews was taken in the state.

The Diary

A major procedural decision was to place a log or diary in each household falling in the sample and to ask some member of the household to record the times each member watched television or listened to radio within a one-week period. The diary used was very similar to the one used by the American Research Bureau as described by Steiner.³ One diary was provided for radio logging and another for television logging. An instruction sheet with a sample page of a completed diary for one day was left with each diary.

Interviewers were instructed to encourage the keeping of the diary by a younger member of the household. Diaries properly filled out represented an accurate record of who was watching or listening to a program at any time of the seven days the record was kept. In addition, the diary indicated the station to which the person was tuned and the name of the program.

The Interview Schedule

The diaries kept in each household were supplemented by a structured interview. Questions from the schedule established whether or not the household members owned a television set and/or a radio receiver in working order. In addition, general informational questions of a socio-economic and socio-cultural nature were asked. The nature of the questions will be explained in later sections appropriate to each type of information.

Statistical Procedures

Information obtained from the interview schedules and diaries was coded and machine processed into tables for analysis. Two statistical tests were used to test the significance of the differences observed. The chi-square (X^2) test was used to analyze hypotheses relating to the importance of mass media in obtaining different types of information. The analysis of variance test was used to analyze the relation of various socio-economic factors to mean listening and viewing times. A significance level of .05 was considered satisfactory for the type data being tested.

¹For a discussion of rural population projections, see Alvin L. Bertrand and Jack Wright, Jr., *Louisiana's Human Resources*, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 583, June 1964.

²For a discussion of area probability and other sampling methods, see Mrs. Laurel K. Sabrosky, "Sampling", *Evaluation in Extension*, ed. Darle Byrn (Topeka: H. M. Ives & Sons, Inc.), pp. 37-44.

³See: Gary A. Steiner, *The People Look at TV*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1960), pp. 384-386.

TELEVISION VIEWING AND RADIO LISTENING PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS AND THEIR SPOUSES

Television Viewing Patterns

It is well known that television viewing patterns are closely related to time of day. This is simply a function of the time most people have available for viewing. These times, of course, vary from one day of the week to another, depending on work and other habits. It is also true that seasonal variations occur, due to type of programming. These factors make it risky to talk of a typical television day. Nevertheless, it can be said that the viewing patterns are typical of a given audience at a given time of year. That is what is done here. All that is claimed is that Louisiana rural adults were characterized by the patterns described in the late spring of 1967. In this regard, there is reason to believe that weekday patterns, at least, would be roughly the same throughout the year. This would be true because of agricultural and other rural routines.

Seven charts were prepared to show the viewing patterns of the household heads and their spouses in the homes where interviews were conducted. These charts show the percentage of the total number of respondents watching T.V. at any given hour during the day for each day during an entire week. The trend line which joins the plotted points for each quarter hour interval forms a viewing curve. Such a curve is shown for males, females and the total sample population on each chart. These curves are described in the following discussions.

Weekday Viewing Patterns

Charts on pages 7 through 10 show the weekday viewing curves of the men and women in the sample population. Scrutiny of these charts indicates that certain patterns persist for each of the several weekdays. The regularity which the curves display leads to the conclusion that there are behavioral norms which can be identified and catalogued. The first and most obvious of these patterns is that women make more use of television during the day than men. This, of course, is expected in terms of the relatively larger amount of time women spend in the home. However, this pattern persists only until 5:30 p.m. From that time on, rural men tend to make up as large a television audience as rural women. The significance of the 5:30 hour seems to be the

national newscasts, which are common to most stations at this time.

A second pattern which is clear is that rural Louisiana men tend to have a peak viewing time from 12:00 noon to 12:45 p.m. Women view in greater numbers during these hours than during morning and afternoon periods, but in lesser numbers than men.

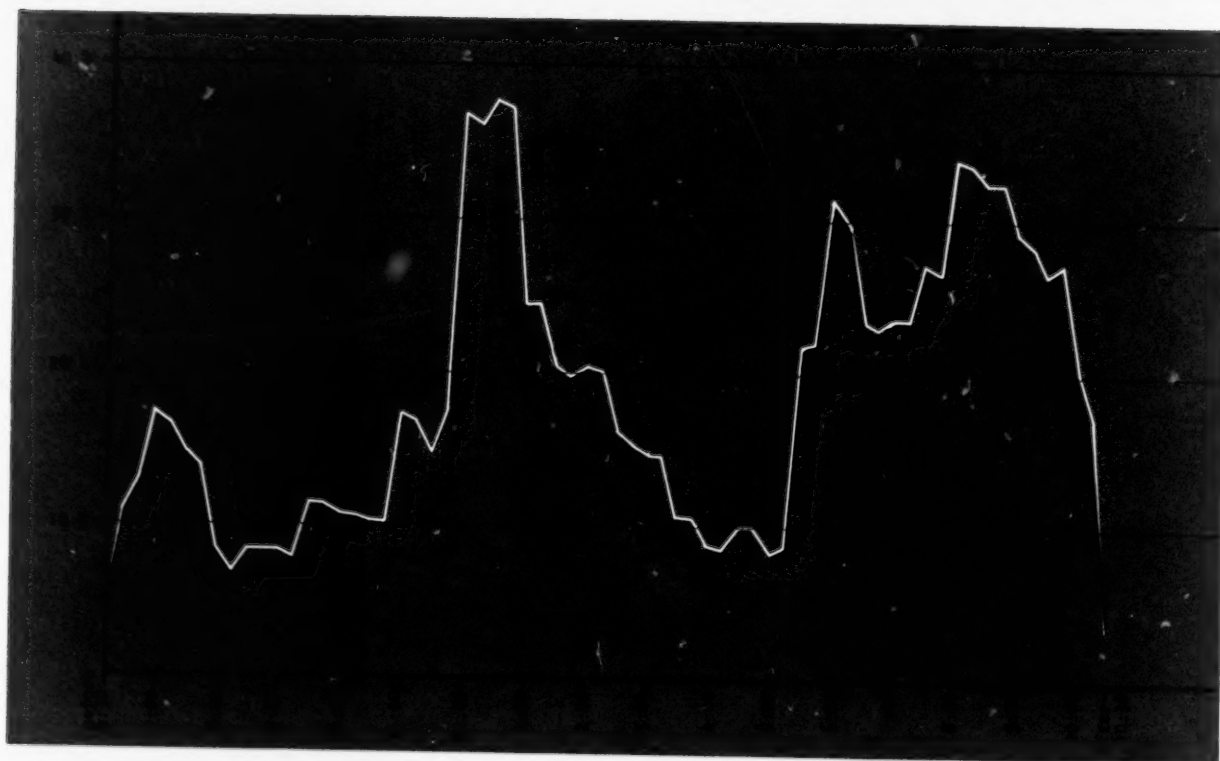
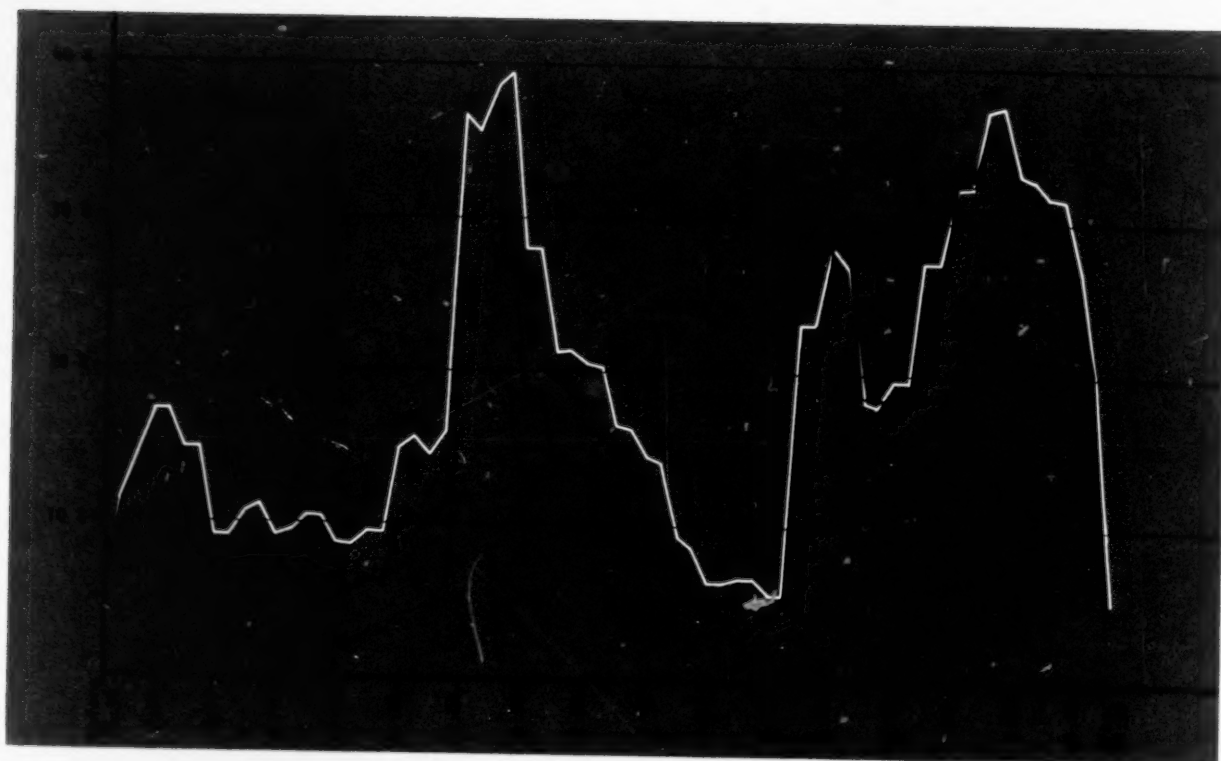
The evening weekday television viewing curves do not follow regular patterns, probably reflecting the program preferences of the rural audience. On Mondays there is a peaking in the curve for both men and women from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. After this, there is a drop in viewers until 7:30 p.m. when viewing rises rapidly to a peak between 8:30 and 8:45 p.m. After this peak, the audience drops off rapidly to about five per cent of the adult heads of households and their spouses at 10:30 p.m. It is not altogether clear why there is a dip in viewing in the early evening. Two hypotheses may be suggested—farmers and their wives are either eating supper or tending to other chores. Early evening programming for younger viewers also may have some influence.

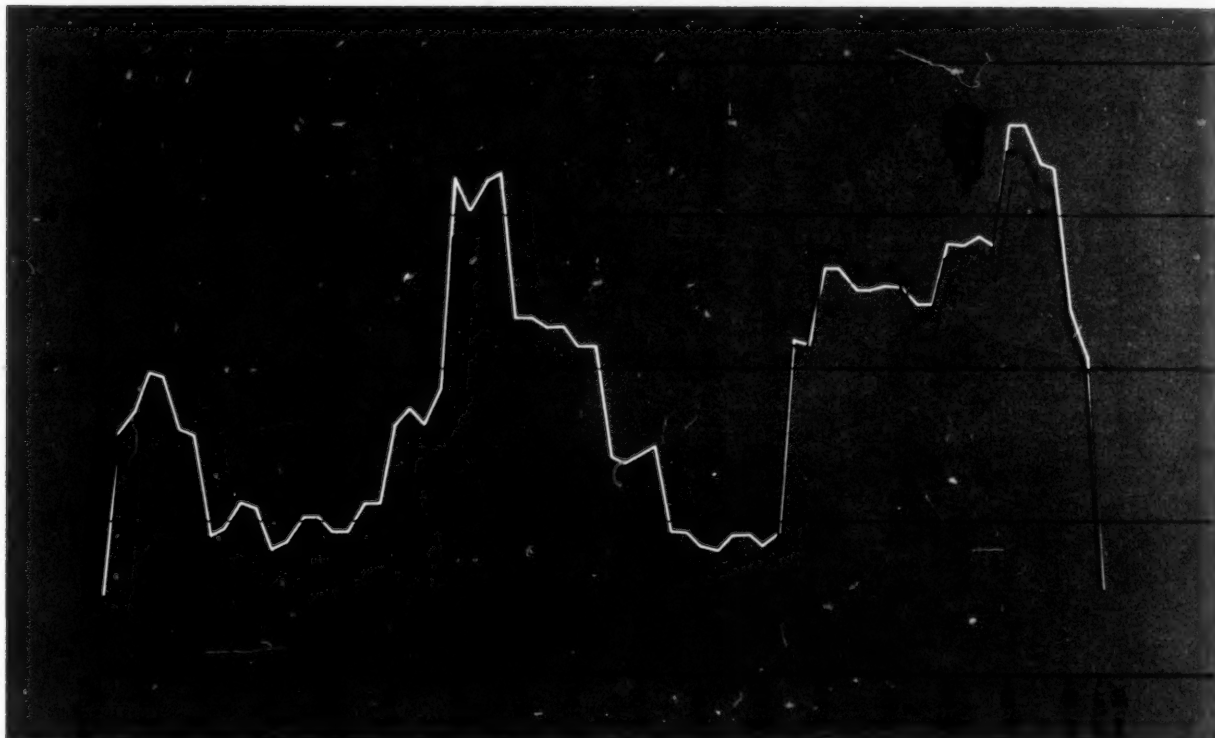
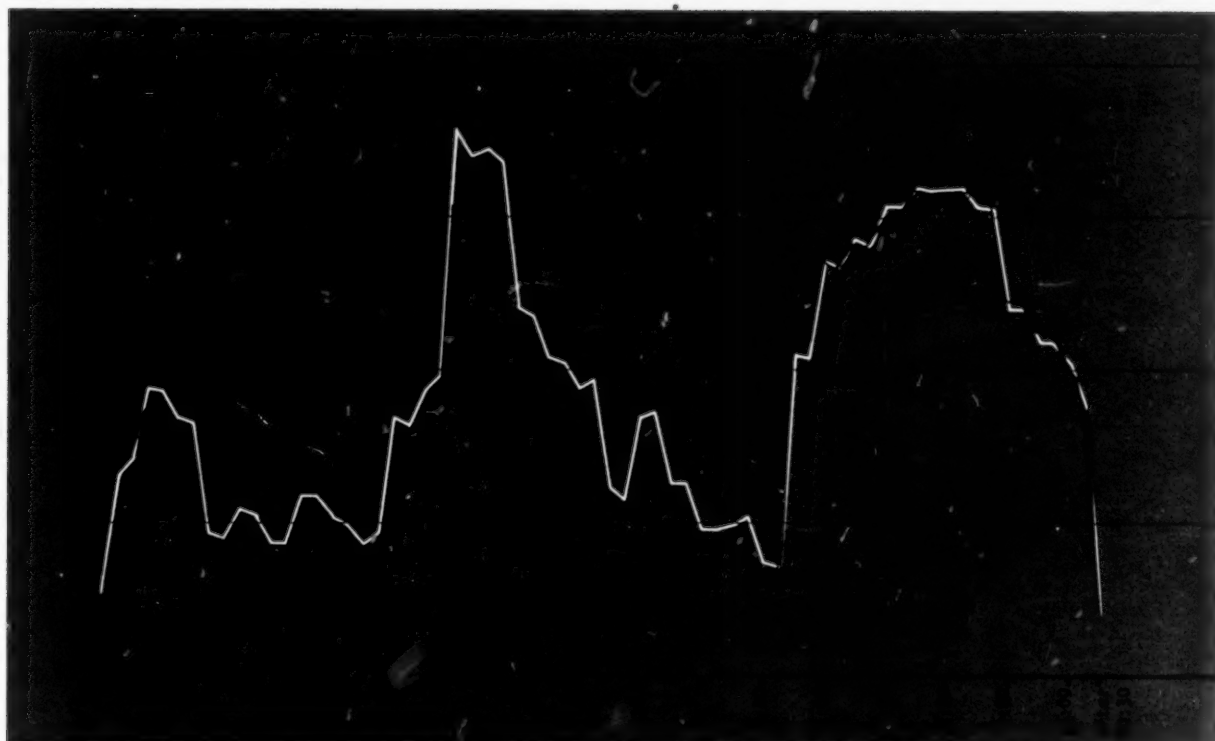
The Tuesday viewing curves are similar to the Monday curves. The only difference is that the dip which occurs after the 6:15 hour is not as great. Also, it is interesting that the percentage of women in the evening audience is consistently higher than the percentage of men until 10:30 p.m. The only apparent reason for this is that women had some program which appealed to them during this hour.

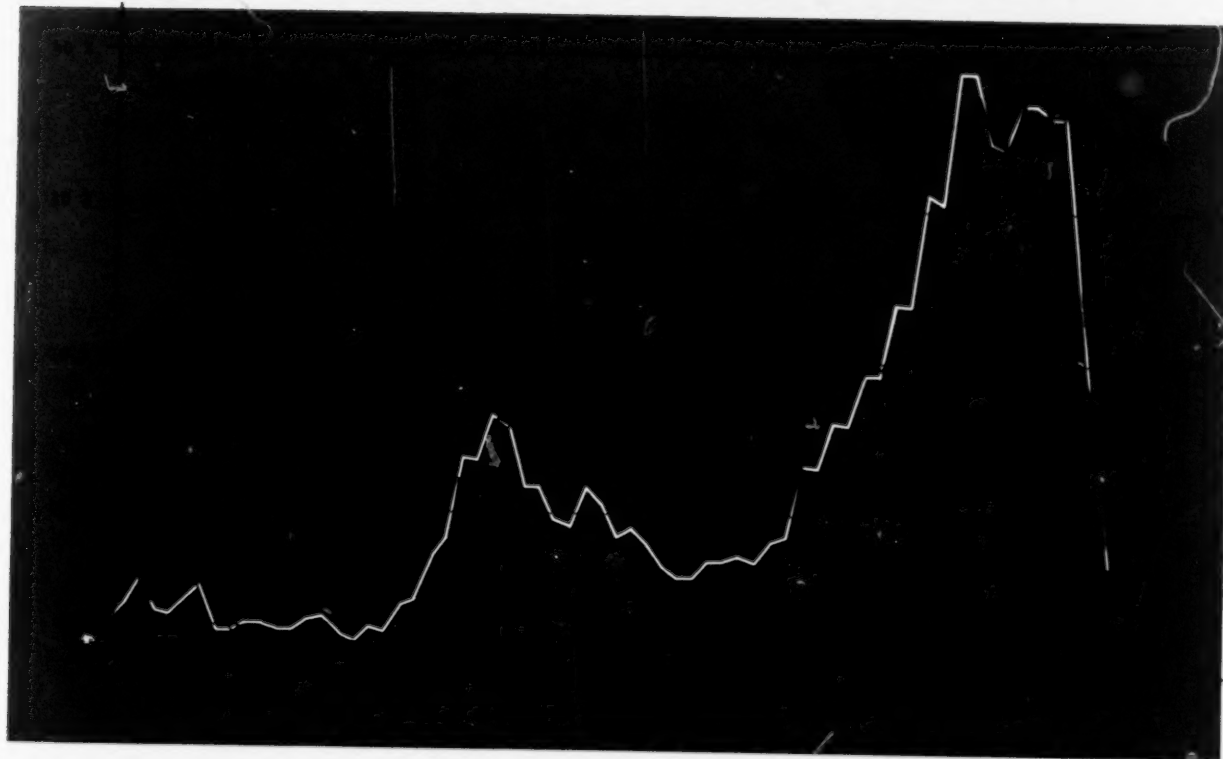
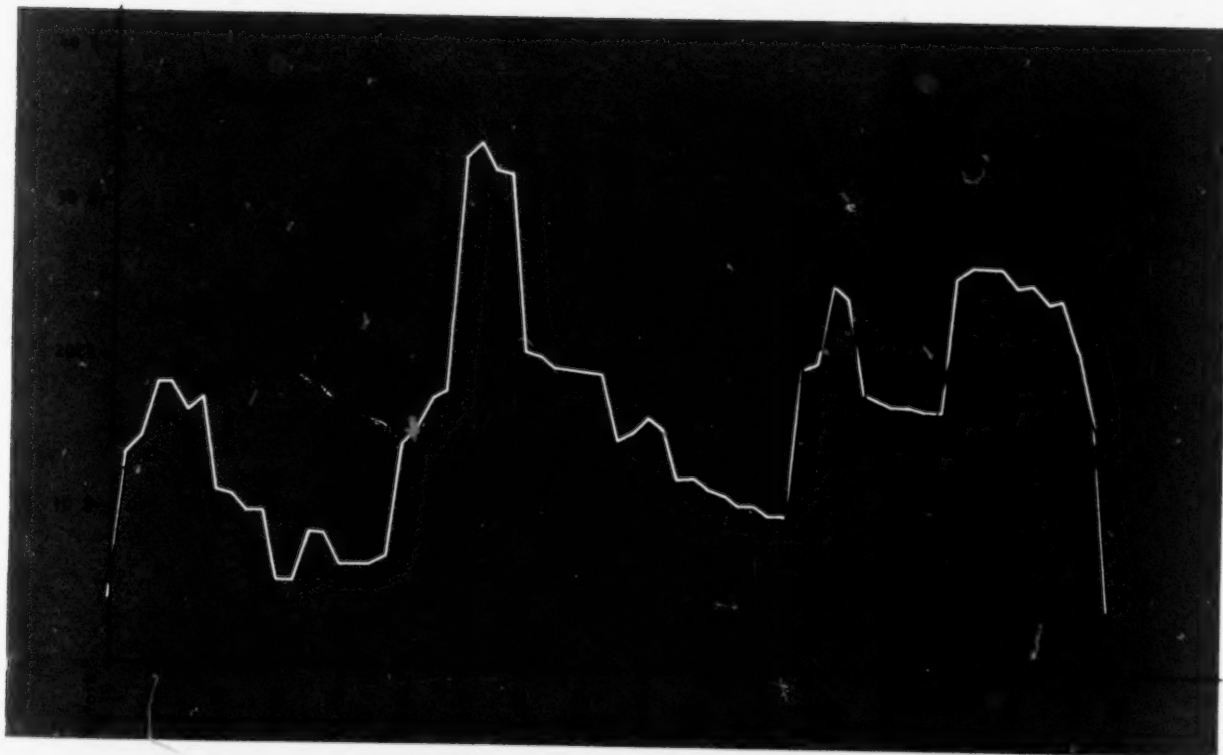
Wednesday viewing is somewhat different from both Monday and Tuesday. There is a drop in viewing after 5:45 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. The percentage of men and women viewers remains about the same throughout the evening, showing more loyalty for the remaining days of the week. Again, the explanation must fall back on programs. In this case, there seems to be such a strong appeal that supper time makes no difference.

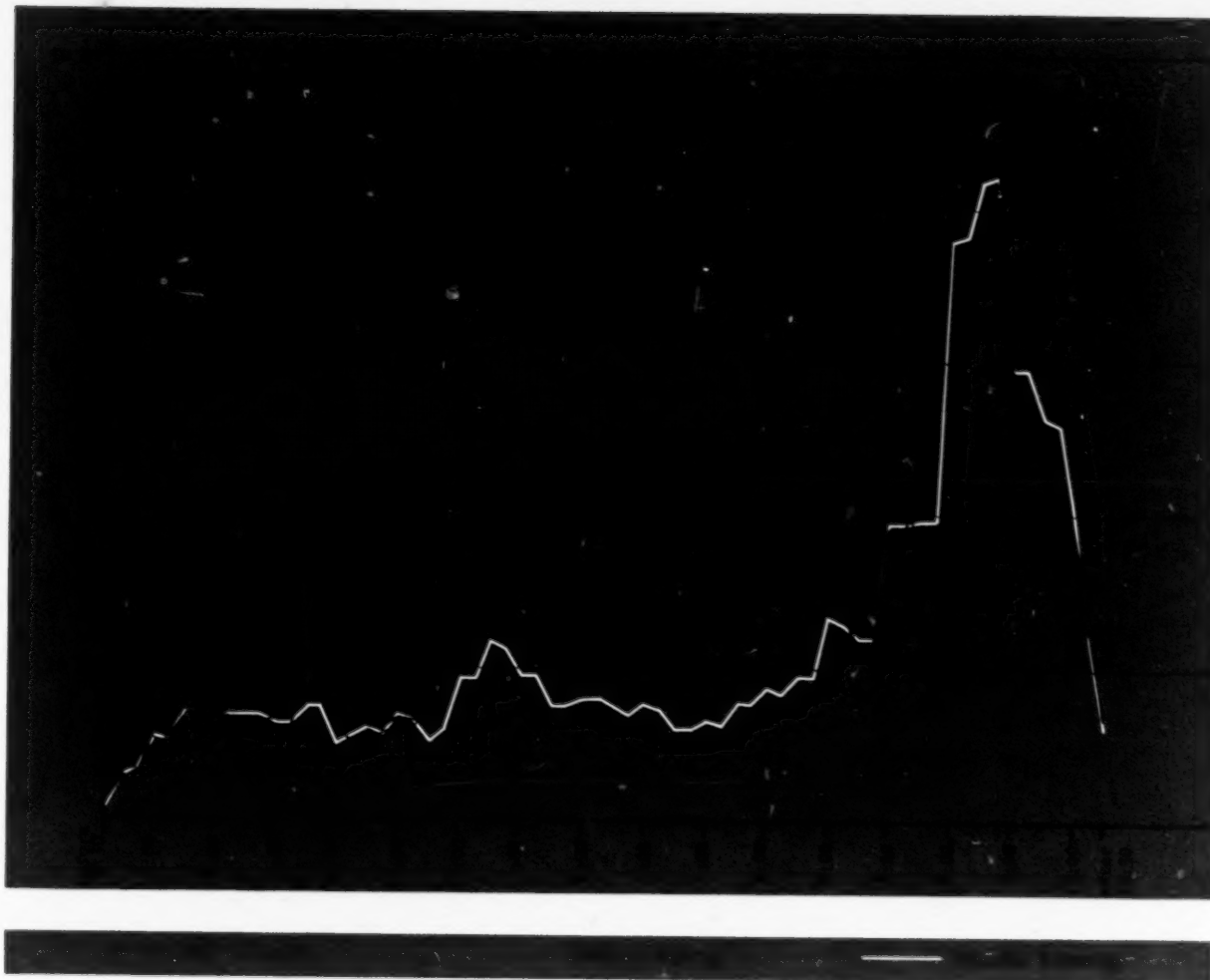
Viewing curves for Thursday approach those for Wednesday, but do flatten with a slight dip between 5:30 and 8:45 p.m. At 9:00 p.m. there is a sharp rise in percentage of viewers which lasts only 30 to 40 minutes.

Friday viewing tends to be more like Tuesday patterns than any other day. The only difference is that the percentage of viewers is not as high









during the evening hours. Women predominate in the audience after 8:00 p.m.

One observation seems in order after inspection of the plotted viewing curves. This is the fact that the rural adult television audience is not overwhelmingly attracted to the medium. At no time during the week did the percentage of potential viewers in the interview sample watching television surpass 40 per cent. This fact suggests either that farmers have only so much time for T.V., or are not especially drawn to the programs being shown. Daylight savings time may have influenced this somewhat, allowing more time for outside activities.

Comparison with the viewing patterns of rural men and women as determined some 10 years ago shows at least two interesting differences.⁶ In the first place, no peaks in viewing occurred during the noon meal hour 10 years ago. Secondly, the evening viewing peaks 10 years ago were much higher — reaching highs of around 90 per cent of the potential audience between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m.

No doubt T.V. was still a novelty at that time, and the present curves represent a more normal picture. It is tempting to predict that present patterns will persist until another innovation infringes on the present scene so as to drastically affect viewing practices.

Saturday Viewing Pattern

The difference in work routines on weekends makes it advisable to study the use of television on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday customarily is a day when rural people change their work routine. In years past it was the day for shopping or visiting, or the time one engaged in some type of recreation. The viewing curves for Saturday indicate that some of the same patterns persist, but that television changes things somewhat. It is most interesting that the patterns of viewing indicate a very small viewing audience on Saturday morning until 12:00 noon. The percentages of in-

⁶Bertrand & Bates, *op. cit.*; pp 9-17.

interviewees viewing were considerably less on Saturday morning than for various weekdays. Also, the percentages of men and women were near the same. Both these facts suggest some family activity which took adults out of the house. The audience begins to pick up at noon on Saturdays and builds to a peak around 2:00 p.m. Interestingly, male viewers predominate over the female audience and continue to do so until 5:30 in the afternoon. This, no doubt, is a reflection on the fact that athletic events are shown on Saturday afternoon television. Saturday night viewing begins to pick up at 6:00 p.m. and achieves a high peak around 8:00 p.m. This audience is fairly well sustained at close to 40 per cent of the potential viewers until 10:00 p.m.

It is of interest that Saturday viewing patterns have not changed as much in 10 years as weekday patterns. The only important change is that the evening viewing audience on Saturday is now somewhat smaller—a factor related to the fact that television is no longer a novelty.

Sunday Viewing Patterns

One might expect more attention to television on Sundays than on Saturdays. However, this does not seem to hold true. Although viewing curves are higher on Sunday morning than on Saturday morning, they are lower Sunday afternoon and evening than on Saturdays at these times. Sunday viewing tends to hit a low peak about 12:30 p.m. and to continue at about 10 per cent of the potential audience until around 7:00 p.m. Men predominate in the audience until 7:00 p.m. After this, viewing rises sharply to more than 40 per cent of the audience, then drops sharply after 9:00 p.m.

Sunday viewing patterns have changed somewhat over the past 10 years. For one thing, there is more viewing on Sunday morning, a fact which may be associated with relaxed church attendance. For another, the audience included a larger percentage of potential viewers and extended over a longer period of time in 1958. Both these trends are worthy of further exploration.

Radio Listening Patterns

Radio, in many ways, has become the victim of T.V. It is only at times and in places where the necessary attention cannot be given to viewing that radio tends to come into use. This fact is dramatically illustrated in charts on pages 12 and 13, which portray the percentages of the total of

household heads and their spouses in the study population who listen to radio at various hours during weekdays. Inspection of these charts quickly impresses one with the fact that radio comes into its own only in the early morning. Apparently, in the time from 6:30 a.m. until about 8:00 a.m., members of the household do not turn to television as much as they do later. The collected data indicates there is seldom more than three or four per cent of the potential audience listening to radio after 8:00-9:00 a.m. Although data in the charts do not show sex differences in radio listening, it seems safe to expect that women make up the majority of this audience.

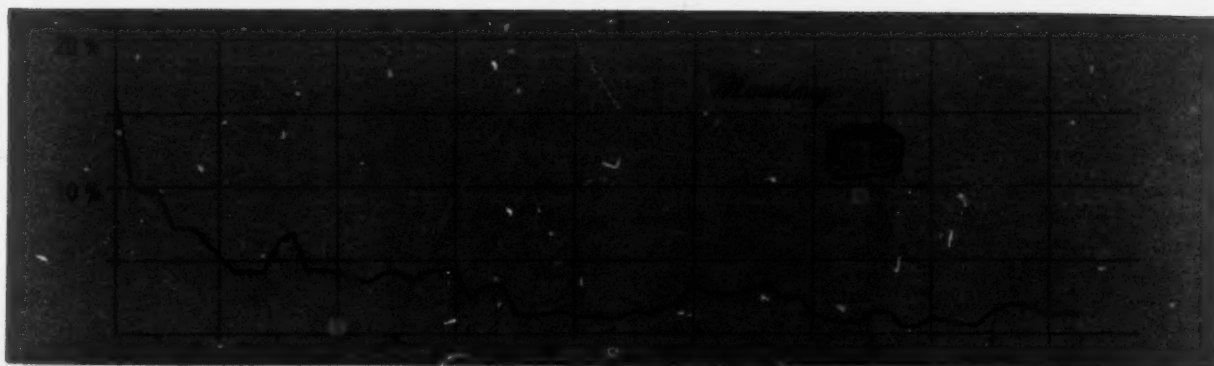
There is not much difference in weekday and Saturday and Sunday radio listening. The difference which appears seems to indicate a drop in listeners on weekends.

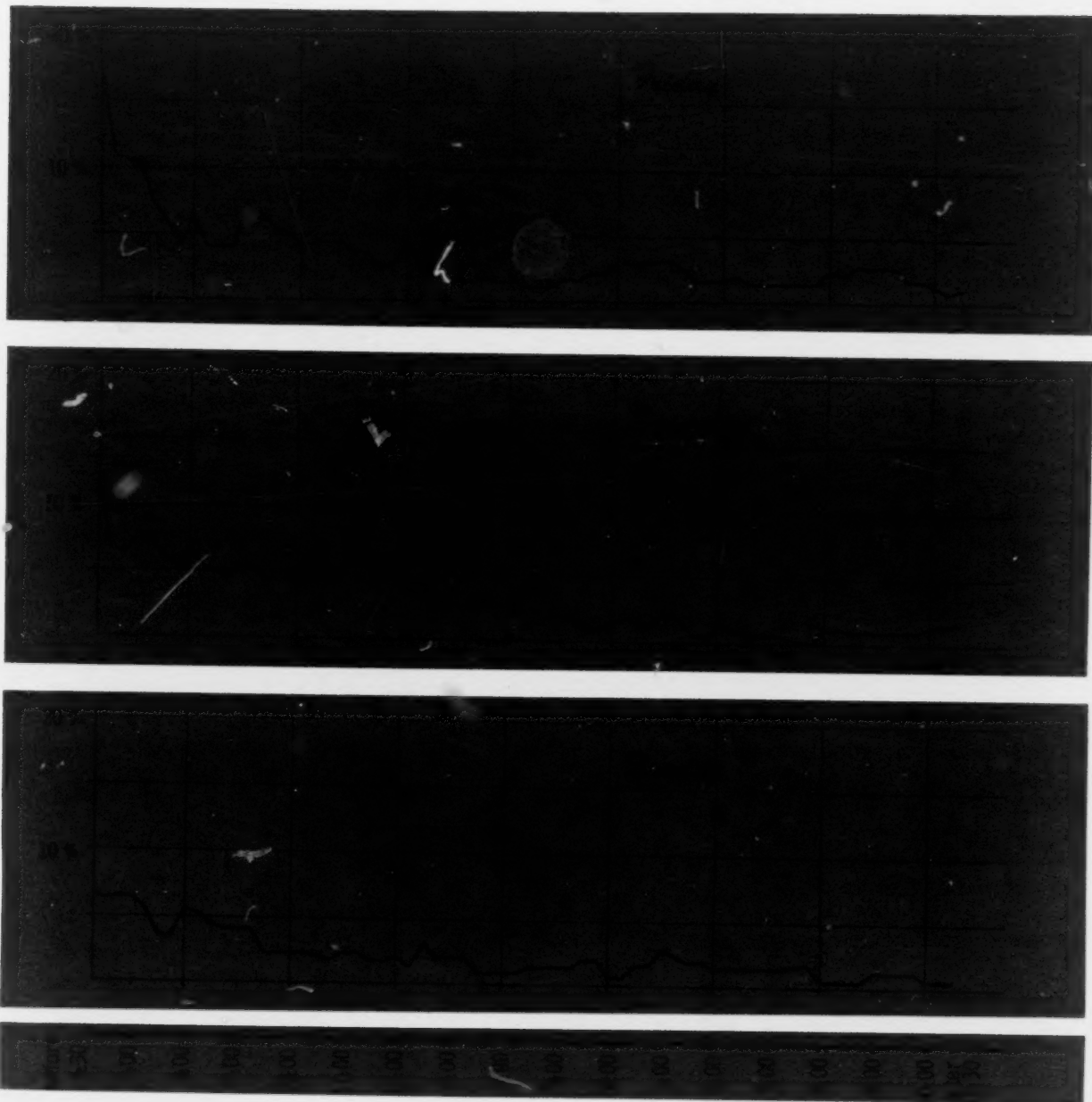
The 20-year span from 1948 to 1968 has witnessed what might be termed the rise and fall of radio listening in rural areas of Louisiana. At the time of the earlier study, the listening curves plotted showed farmers and their wives devoted the time to radio that they now devote to television.⁷ In fact, the curves show almost identical patterns, except that larger percentages of clients were recorded for radio listeners 20 years ago than for T.V. viewers today. One other difference is worth noting. The earlier radio audiences tended to show a peak in the early morning hours, between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., which is not shown on today's television viewing curve.

With regard to the drastic drop in radio listening in Louisiana rural areas, not much more can be said but that this is what may be expected in the face of advancing technology. The same trend can be noted whenever and wherever a new and improved or a more popular practice encroaches on old ways.

The lesson for Extension and other agency personnel attempting to reach rural audiences is quite clear. First, adjustments must be made in the media used to reach farmers and homemakers. Second, programming must be done in light of the particular segment of the audience which will be faithful to a particular medium. In other words, the old communications channels should be kept open, but more thought and effort should be devoted to television. The problem is one of balance, both in terms of medium used and program format and content.

⁷Bertrand and Hitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-22.





RADIO LISTENING—The charts on these pages show the percentage of the total of household heads and their spouses in the study population who listen to radio at various hours during weekdays.

TIME DEVOTED TO TV VIEWING AND RADIO LISTENING BY VARIOUS CLASSES OF RURALITES

This section is devoted to an analysis of the time devoted to T.V. viewing and radio listening. In reviewing these findings, it should be remembered that there are factors other than the ones tested which can and do influence the use of these instruments of communication. For instance, the time of year this survey was taken—May, June, and July 1967—could have made a difference. Television shows were beginning their summer reruns and, for the first time since World War II, Louisiana had gone on daylight saving time. This latter factor meant more daylight time for outdoor activities that could compete with the electronic media. It is suspected that, if the survey had been conducted during the winter months, the absence of these factors alone would have increased the mean viewing and listening times of respondents as well as the percentage of the population paying attention to the media. However, it is doubted that there would have been much difference in radio listening times.

Other factors, such as the fact that many South Louisiana farmers who raised rice were at a time when they could leave their crops and go on vacation, also have relevance. In North Louisiana, truck and fruit farmers were engaged in harvest operations and had to be at home.

In this regard, it may seem that this was a bad time of year to conduct the survey. However, the diversity of Louisiana rural enterprises is such that almost any time of the year would have found rural people engaged in distracting activities.

Interestingly, the researchers found respondents oriented more toward television than toward other mass media. In fact, it was often difficult to make respondents understand that it was just as important for them to keep the radio diary as it was to keep the television diary. Some adults indicated that their children often turned on the radio in the house, but they (the adults) paid little attention to it.*

Color T.V. Increases Viewing Time

Of the 589 households where T.V. diaries were kept, 48 (17 percent) were equipped with a color set. This percentage is large enough to make possible some generalizations with regard to related viewing time.

Analysis of the mean times devoted to television viewing between color television owners

and non-owners showed that owners of color sets devoted significantly more time to watching television than did non-owners. Table 1 shows that color set owners had a mean viewing time of 43 hours and 15 minutes, while non-owners viewed 31 hours and 21 minutes.

It will be noticed that only seventeen per cent of the responding households owned color television. Why is there a significantly greater devotion to viewing among this small group?

One explanation could be that the more avid television viewers are the first to buy such sets, feeling the additional expenditure is worth the pleasure they derive from it. Another explanation could be that the additional dimension of color in the picture makes the programs more enjoyable and meaningful.**

This finding implies that the medium of television has found a way to further captivate its viewing audience. It could be that the addition of color to the medium has a novelty effect that soon will disappear, but it is more likely that the messages are strengthened by the added speciousness. Persons seeking to reach rural audiences through television or other visual means should take advantage of this by presenting any films, slides or other visual material in color.

TABLE 1
Mean Viewing Times of Color Television Set Owners and Black and White Television Set Owners

Type T.V.	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time** (Hours-Minutes)
Black and White	241	83	31-21
Color	48	17	43-15
TOTALS	289	100	

**Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

*Because of the overshadowing effect of television over radio, it is felt that future studies of radio should be conducted separately from other mass media surveys. This does not mean the results of this survey are not valid, but merely that the data gathering processes would be easier.

**After conducting experiments with viewers of black and white and color T.V., Scanlon concluded the latter was a more absorbing medium. His hypothesis was that color changes the emotional impact of T.V. and makes the viewer more of a participant and less of a viewer.

Women Spend More Time Watching T.V. Than Men

There was an almost even division of males and females included among household heads and their spouses. A total of 288 females (52 per cent) and 270 males (48 per cent) were included in the sample population. Normally, one would expect women to spend more time watching T.V. because they spend more time at home. However, the question of how much more time is an important one. The diaries provided an answer to this question. For both television and radio, women were found to devote more time to the media. Statistically, these findings were highly significant. (See Tables 2 and 3)

It was found that females had a mean weekly viewing time of 19 hours and 33 minutes, while males had a mean weekly viewing time of 14 hours and 49 minutes. From these data, it can be concluded that rural women spend about 4½ more hours before the T.V. set than do rural men each week. Reference to the charts showing viewing times indicates this is mostly during morning and early afternoon hours as one would expect. It is of some import that women and men spend as much time as they do in this type activity.

A consistent remark made to interviewers by female respondents was: "I love my stories." This meant they were devoted to the daytime serials seen during the week on television. Many women seemed to have a possessive, personal feeling about the serials.

TABLE 2
Mean Viewing Times by Sex

Sex	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Male	270	48	14-49
Female	288	52	19-33
TOTALS	558	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 3
Mean Listening Times by Sex

Sex	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Male	259	48	2-22
Female	277	52	4-40
TOTALS	536	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Income Does Not Significantly Affect T.V. Viewing and Radio Listening

Statistical association of income with viewing and listening times indicated that this factor is non-significant. From this finding it can be concluded that income groups should not be considered too strongly when using these media to reach rural audiences. The use of T.V. and radio is fairly homogenous at all income levels.

It is noteworthy, as seen in Table 4, that the lowest mean viewing time was in the highest income category, while the highest mean viewing time was in the income bracket just below it.

TABLE 4
Mean Viewing Times by Income

Income	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Under \$3,000	89	16	17-53
\$3,001 - \$6,000	161	29	17-8
\$6,001 - \$9,000	148	26	17-43
\$9,001 - \$12,000	99	18	18-29
Over \$12,000	61	11	13-34
TOTALS	558	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Table 5 shows that the lowest income group had the highest mean listening time for radio. This could be attributed to a group that did not own television and suggests further research to compare radio listening in television families to radio listening in non-television families.

It is probable that intervening variables such as age and education are operative in connection with income. At any rate, more study of this theory seems in order.

TABLE 5
Mean Listening Times by Income

Income	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Under \$3,000	84	16	4-37
\$3,001 - \$6,000	156	29	3-19
\$6,001 - \$9,000	142	27	3-19
\$9,001 - \$12,000	93	17	3-10
Over \$12,000	61	11	3-52
TOTALS	536	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

The Young and the Old are the Most Avid T.V. and Radio Fans

Another factor found to be statistically significant in the amount of time rural persons devote to radio and television was age. It should be noted that, in both media, the youngest and the oldest respondents were the heaviest users. This can be seen in Table 6 and Table 7.

Since there was a small number of respondents in the youngest age category (four), this group cannot be considered significant. Therefore, it should be concluded that older persons are heavier users of electronic media.

The implication of this finding is that older persons not only have more time to devote to these media, but also are able to use them as a source of entertainment. It is obvious that older persons are retired and/or have fewer household and family responsibilities.

TABLE 6
Mean Viewing Times by Age

Age	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
16 - 20	4	1	37-45
21 - 25	23	4	16-46
26 - 35	85	15	16-24
36 - 45	173	31	16-15
46 - 55	134	24	16-41
56 - 65	89	16	18-38
66 & Older	48	9	20-0
TOTALS	556	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 7
Mean Listening Times by Age

Age	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
16 - 20	4	1	16-37
21 - 25	22	4	4-25
26 - 35	81	15	4-35
36 - 45	165	31	3-15
46 - 55	133	25	3-14
56 - 65	87	16	1-50
66 & Older	43	8	5-30
TOTALS	535	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Education Does Not Significantly Affect Viewing and Listening Time

The education of respondents was not related significantly to the time they spent watching television and listening to the radio. It can be con-

cluded that the use of these devices cuts across all levels of education among rural persons in Louisiana, but it is perhaps for different reasons and purposes.

The implication of the above finding is that the educational level of presentation of radio and television messages must be about right, or that there is enough variety to satisfy persons with all levels of education. If all messages were designed for a specific educational level, it is probable that significant differences would have been noted in the answers of respondents. The mean viewing and listening time by educational groups are shown in Tables 8 and 9.

TABLE 8
Mean Viewing Times by Education

Education	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
None	17	3	18-32
1 - 4 Years	27	5	16-58
5 - 8 Years	117	21	18-4
1 - 3 H.S.	87	16	16-19
H.S. Grad.	199	36	16-33
1+ College	106	19	17-50
TOTALS	553	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 9
Mean Listening Times by Education

Education	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
None	16	3	1-4
1 - 4 Years	27	5	2-32
5 - 8 Years	120	22	3-41
1 - 3 H.S.	79	15	3-0
H.S. Grad.	190	36	3-54
1+ College	100	19	3-52
TOTALS	532	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Social Participation and T.V. Viewing and Radio Listening are Related

One of the most interesting findings of this study was the association of listening and viewing times with social participation. Only in radio listening was this difference found to be statistically significant. Nevertheless, a trend can be seen in the data for television viewing.

In Table 10 it can be seen that the higher the social participation score, the less time respondents devote to watching television. Table 11

shows that the higher the amount of social participation, the greater the mean radio listening time of respondents.

TABLE 10
Mean Viewing Times by Social Participation

Participation	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	177	32	18-31
Medium	170	30	17-8
High	209	38	16-21
TOTALS	556	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 11
Mean Listening Times by Social Participation

Social Participation	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	166	31	2-31
Medium	171	32	3-48
High	199	37	4-13
TOTALS	536	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Social participation scores were arrived at in the following manner. One point was assigned for each organization to which a head of household or spouse belonged. Another point was given if the person was an officer. If he attended regularly, he was assigned two points. If he attended sometimes, he was assigned one point. No points were assigned if the respondent indicated he never attended.

Social participation scores were determined when the data was compiled, and the same score was assigned to the head of household and to the spouse. This was considered to be a "family" social participation score. If these persons received zero to three points for social participation, they were placed in the low social participation group. If they had four to seven points, they were placed in the medium group, and if they had eight or more points, they were placed in the high social participation group.

Level of Living is not Significant in T.V. Viewing and Radio Listening

Level of living was not statistically insignificant as a factor in radio listening and T.V. viewing. It can be concluded from the data in Tables 12 and 13 that level of living makes little difference in the amount of time Louisiana ruralites listen to

radio or watch television. Again there may be intervening variables which account for this pattern. Said another way, one person in a given high or low socio-economic level might view or not view for different reasons than a person in another economic level.

To arrive at a level of living score, respondents were asked if they had certain convenience items in their homes. These included car, running water (cold), running water (hot), telephone, automatic dishwasher, home freezer, air conditioner, central heating, clothes dryer and electric blanket. Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of rooms in the house, not counting baths and closets. By visual observation, interviewers determined the type of exterior construction of the house and whether or not it was in good repair.

Level of living scores were determined when the data was compiled, with the same score being assigned to the head of household and spouse. One point was assigned for each convenience item in the house. If it had two rooms or less, no points were assigned. For three to five rooms, the sample was assigned one point, and for six or more rooms, two points. Three points were given for brick exterior construction, two for wood siding, and one for asbestos siding. If the house was in good condition, two points were assigned. One point was given if the house was in fair condition and no points if it was in poor condition.

TABLE 12
Mean Viewing Times by Level of Living

Level of Living	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	157	28	18-2
Medium	177	32	16-29
High	222	40	17-24
TOTALS	556	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 13
Mean Listening Times by Level of Living

Level of Living	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	154	29	4-37
Medium	166	31	3-5
High	216	40	3-10
TOTALS	536	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

If respondents received zero to 10 points for level of living, they were placed in a low level of living category. If they received 11 to 12 points, they were placed in the medium level category, and if they received thirteen or more points, they were placed in the high level of living category.

Negroes Devote More Time to Radio and T.V. than Whites

The race of respondents was found to be related significantly into the amount of time they devoted to viewing television and to listening to the radio. Using the information shown on Table 14 and on Table 15, it can be concluded that Negro rural residents devote more time to viewing television and listening to radio than do white residents.

Why the above should be true is open to further research. It is probable that Negroes do not share the affluence of whites and do not participate in as many outside activities. In this sense radio and T. V. could be more of a recreational outlet for the Negro.

TABLE 14
Mean Viewing Times by Race

Race	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
White	480	86	16-48
Non-White	76	14	20-20
TOTALS	556	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 15
Mean Listening Times by Race

Race	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
White	459	86	3-15
Non-White	77	14	5-25
TOTALS	536	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

Reading and Radio Listening are Significantly Associated, But Reading and T.V. are Not

The amount of reading material received into the homes of respondents was significantly related to time devoted to radio listening, but not

to television viewing. This finding raises some interesting speculations. It can be suggested that persons having large amounts of reading material available devote more time to listening to radio, possibly because they read and listen at the same time. It also may be that these persons are more discriminating as T. V. viewers.

To determine the amount of reading material going into the home, respondents were asked to indicate the number of daily newspapers, the number of weekly newspapers, the number of farm magazines and the number of other publications going into the home. All regularly received publications, including religious newspapers, were taken into account. Scores were assigned with one point for each publication going into the home. When compiling the data, respondents were again placed in categories of low, medium and high. Respondents reporting zero to two publications were placed in the low category. Those reporting three to six publications were placed in the medium category and those reporting seven or more publications were placed in the high category. Scores were assigned to both the head of household and spouse.

TABLE 16
Mean Viewing Times by Amount of Reading Material Received in Households

Reading Material	Number	Per Cent	Viewing Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	185	33	16-12
Medium	215	39	18-1
High	153	28	17-40
TOTALS	553	100	

*Mean viewing time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

TABLE 17
Mean Listening Times by Amount of Reading Material Received in Households

Reading Material	Number	Per Cent	Listening Time* (Hours-Minutes)
Low	177	33	3-16
Medium	211	40	3-2
High	145	27	4-48
TOTALS	533	100	

*Mean listening time for all heads of households and spouses within category for one week.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MASS MEDIA SOURCES OF HOMEMAKING, AGRICULTURAL AND NEWS INFORMATION

Each interviewee was asked to name the most important mass media source of certain types of information for the adult members of his or her household. The four sources from which a choice was allowed were T.V., radio, newspapers and magazines. Interviewers reported some difficulty in forcing respondents to make one choice among the four media. However, once it was explained that the response needed was one medium over all others, which adult members of the household felt was the most important, respondents seemed to have little difficulty in giving an answer.

The types of information tested included homemaking ideas, agricultural practices, local news, and national and international news. Responses relating to each are discussed in turn.

The Most Important Source for Homemaking Information

It was expected that a high percentage of respondents would list magazines as the most important source of homemaking information. The fact that almost as large a number of respondents indicated television as magazines was somewhat of a surprise. This strong inclination toward television as a source of homemaking information probably is attributable to the local homemaking shows produced by television stations throughout the state. Several respondents indicated during interviews that they watched homemaking programs and could identify Extension Service personnel who appeared on them regularly. Table 18 shows the percentages of informants naming the various mass media they considered most important for homemaking information.

TABLE 18
Most Important Sources for Various Types of
Information by Percentage of Rural
Louisiana Respondents

Type of Information	SOURCES OF INFORMATION					Total Per Cent
	No.	T. V.	Radio	News- papers	Maga- zines	
Homemaking	288	41	7	10	42	100
Agriculture	273	29	16	13	42	100
Local News	299	45	25	30		100
National & Int. News	297	84	6	9	1	100

The implication of the above findings is that Extension agents and others concerned with reaching rural audiences with homemaking in-

formation should continue and perhaps expand the work they are doing on television. Even though magazines rank slightly higher than television as a source of homemaking news, it would be much harder to work through a regional or national publication of this type than through a local television station.

Further study could be done in this area to determine the subject matter homemakers would like to see on these television shows. Some work also could be done to determine how much homemaking information is retained by the audience.

Since Extension agents already are doing extensive homemaking information work on radio and in newspapers, a re-evaluation of this work in terms of its effectiveness in reaching the rural population might be in order. It must be remembered that the results of this survey do not indicate that the present work is not effective, but simply that it is not considered as important a source as television and magazines.

The Most Important Source for Agricultural Information

The high ranking which magazines received as the most important source of agricultural information was predictable. Many farm publications are specialized and are circulated to persons interested in one or another specialty crop. See table 1.

It was surprising that television ranked as high as it did as an important source of agricultural information. There was only one television show in the state devoted strictly to agricultural news. Other stations devote segments of various shows to agricultural information. No doubt, the time devoted to agricultural information on television is having some impact on rural residents.

Extension Service agents who have traditionally placed emphasis on radio and newspaper media should not be greatly distressed by these findings as they are indicative of the total rural population and not solely the farm clientele. However, there is an implication for agents who wish to do mass media work in rural non-farm areas. In fact, one implication of this study is that more work should be done on television to reach more of the rural population.

Later studies could determine who is seeking information and what kinds of agricultural infor-

mation is being sought through mass media channels. Efforts also could be made to determine why radio and newspapers ranked significantly lower in importance than magazines and even television as an important source of information.

Again, it must be remembered that the responses do not mean the source is the most accurate, the most comprehensive, or the quickest. It merely means it is considered the most important by the respondent. In this regard, it is interesting to learn that national news magazines are

not penetrating into rural areas of Louisiana.

In view of this finding, and the fact that rural viewers consider television the most important source of local news, one may suggest that television stations would profit by devoting more air time to broadcasting local news rather than repeating news that already has been given by the networks. More research in this area could determine the feasibility of such a change, both from the standpoint of the stations and the prospective audience.

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